The 'Freedom' Urge in Austria-Hungary

THE resignation of the Austrian Cabinet, the mild-toned speech of Count Czernin, the growing evidences of political and economic discontent in Austria-Hungary and President Wilson's latest message to Congress again call attention to the recent political developments and tendencies in that enemy country. Since the Emperor Charles came to the throne much has been made in the German press of indications that a more liberal régime was to be introduced there, with some scheme of local self-government which would do justice in a measure to the strivings of the various races for greater freedom and opportunity for self-development. Debates in the Austrian and Hungarian Representative Assemblies as late as November and December, however, do not hold out any prospect for such a happy solution of Austro-Hungarian racial problems.

According to reports in "The New Europe" and the "Frankfurter Zeitung," the starting point of these debates was a discussion of the Polish question in the Austrian Parliament on November 9, in the course of which prominent Slav deputies sharply denounced Hungary for what they regarded as its gross oppression of non-Magyar nationalities. The echo to this was a heated discussion in the Hungarian Parliament. There Baron Perényi fiercely denounced the "disgraceful, impertinent and criminal" attacks of the Czechs upon Hungary's integrity. This referred to a demand of the Czechs that certain counties be detached from Hungary and united to Bohemia. In reply to this he said: "Neither thirteen nor three counties, nor one foot of Hungarian soil, will we allow to be stolen from us. What they want let them conquer by force or arms! Let them send the notorious Czech brigades against us." This referred to the Bohemian troops who deserted from the Austrians in 1916 and took a prominent part in fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Russians in the Brusiloff offensive.

It excited the ire of Baron Perényi to a high degree that the attacks of the Czechs upon Hungary in the Austrian Parliament called forth no rebuke from the Austrian Premier or the President of the House, and he insisted upon interpreting their silence according to the old law principle that "silence gives consent." Their neglect of their duty to protest caused them to become, said Perényi, "voluntarily or involuntarily accomplices of this criminal onslaught upon Hungary." Then he spoke the following "serious word" to the Austrian friends of the monarchy:

"Where do they think it will lead if they allow the peoples of Austria to be incited still further against us, and put no brake upon this hatred and passion? Are they not afraid lest in Hungary also great and powerful parties might arise, whose only watchword was, 'Down with the false friends! Away from Austria!'? Halt before it is too late, and remember that those who work for the breakdown of Hungary are digging Austria's grave!"

Only One Way to Put an End To These Intrigues

Then Polónyi, Minister of Justice eleven years ago, argued that the formation of an independent Hungarian army was the only way of stopping such intrigues. Count Julius Andrassy professed that he felt no alarm about the nationalist and federalist aspirations of the Czechs, South-Slavs and Ukrainians; nevertheless, he regarded the "tendencies of the Czechs a grave danger for the dynasty and the monarchy." They were proved disloyal, and part of their troops went over to the enemy. From the standpoint of the monarchy, as a whole, he said: "It is undoubtedly most harmful that the Slavs follow so revolutionary a policy. That can only lead to the collapse of Austria."

Andrassy admitted that he at first was also hurt by the silence of the Premier and the President of the Austrian Parliament, for if they approved the attacks of the Czechs upon Hungary "a further common life between these two states of the monarchy would be impossible"; but he went on to give grounds for concluding that their silence could not be construed as approval.

Then Dr. Wekerle, the Prime Minister, assured the House that every possible step was being taken to prevent Czech agitation among the Slovaks of Hungary. He had presented a memorandum, he said, both to the Austrian Premier and the Emperor denouncing the Slav claims as unjust and incompatible with Hungarian interests and demanding that steps be taken to punish such attacks in future. It contained this passage: "And as it concerns us, too, whether our neighbor Austria is organized on a federalist or a dual basis, I went so far as to declare that unless the ground were energetically cut away from under these intrigues the process of dissolution must begin."

Wekerle went on to assert that the Slavs must revise their aspirations by bringing them into harmony with the dualist basis of the empire. He appealed for unity as the best guarantee against Slav aspirations. "That," he said, "is our strong and impregnable fortress, if the golden band which unites us is strengthened by the support of the crown. And to prove its impregnable character I venture, with his majesty's permission, to announce his declaration, but there is not even the bare possibility of his majesty not employing all his authority to nullify efforts directed against the lawful independence or territorial integrity of the Hungarian state."

This caused the Slavs—Czechs and South Slavs—in the Austrian Parliament to return to the fight. They interpellated the Premier about his attitude in this matter, reasserted their national demands, and—

"Warned the governments not to drag the Crown into political dispute, if only for the reason that in these times such a step could have no other practical result save to bring home with added force to the peoples whose interests and aspirations are thereby affected the painful difference between a people which enjoys state independence and sovereignty and a people which has been deprived of its independence."

Dr. von Seydler, the Prime Minister, in a lengthy reply to this, referred to certain assurances that he had given the Hungarian government concerning the constitutional question, and added:

"I was all the more bound to do so because certain Austrian parties take an attitude which really conflicts with the integrity of Hungary's constitutional structure, and especially with the dual system. What I had to say to the Hungarian Premier in this connection cannot have been new to him."

Two Principles Underlie All Constitutional Reform

Turning to the question of constitutional reform in Austria itself, the Premier said this must be governed by two fundamental principles—the assertion of the unity of the Austrian state and the maintenance of the existing frontiers of each Crown land (province). Referring then to the efforts to place individual units of the Austrian state in a looser relation to it, the Premier said:

"I must emphasize that such views do not coincide with the programme of the government, which holds that any loosening of the state structure would not be of advantage to the state or to its component parts. It would in any case be quite impossible to try to solve such problems during the war. If, however, the aim of such tendencies is to get our enemies to enforce by means of peace conditions that could only come into being from within and by the will of the state as a whole, then such tendencies must be most strongly condemned and rejected.

"In maintaining the existing provincial frontiers the decisive idea is that the Crown lands, as they are to-day, are organisms of historic growth, and are alive in the popular consciousness, and consequently that no organic change in our constitutional development could ignore these fundamental elements in the state." (Protests.)

He concluded by assuring Hungarian public opinion "that the Austrian government is planning nothing which could in any way impair the inviolability of Hungarian territory or that foundation of the state, the dual system, and that it must repudiate any tendencies toward such an upheaval."

The Vienna correspondent of the "Frankfurter Zeitung" said of these Slav interpellations that if they could be taken seriously they would mean civil war and revolution. Putting the question, What power is there to back up this threat? the correspondent adds that Austria is far from being Russia, civil order in the state is nowhere undermined, and "the Czech troops, as a precaution, are mixed on the front."

Hungary Grows Restive Under the Raging of the Czechs

The correspondent, however, has his misgivings as to future developments. The government, he says, has adopted the policy in Parliament of letting the Czechs rage to their hearts' content; and this was causing discontent in Hungary. Besides, "nobody knows whether this comedy may not turn some day into a serious matter, and if the government does not show more resolution in making the Parliament comprehend the seriousness of its tasks the government will some day find itself in a situation that it cannot master. It cannot be doubted that its authority must in the long run suffer greatly if it continues its present attitude."

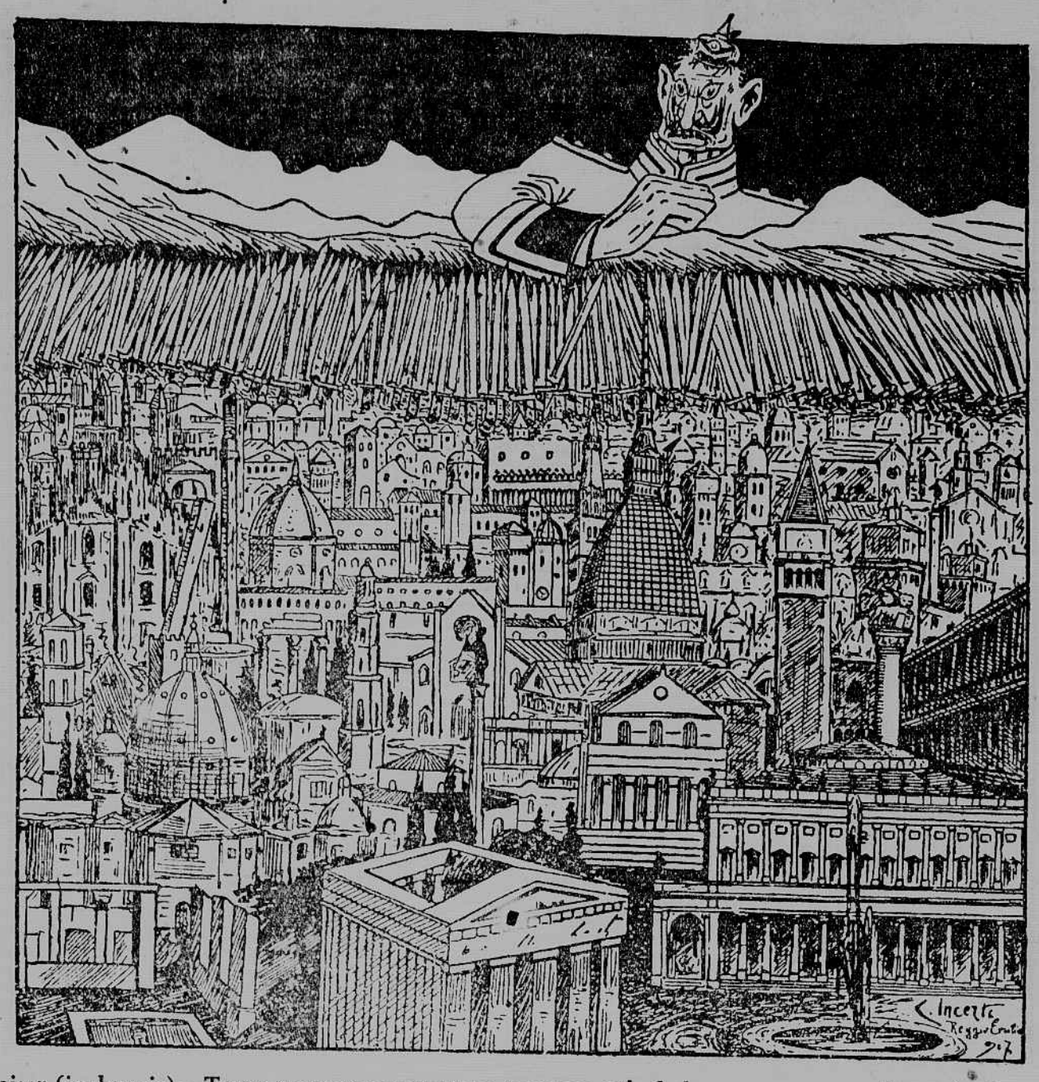
In a subsequent dispatch the same correspondent refers to numerous desertions of Czechs to the Italians and their general attitude at home, and then states their political calculations in this form: If the Entente wins, then the wishes of the Czechs will be fulfilled without further effort, for the Entente has been able to reach the conclusion that the Czech people, in their sympathies and their strivings, are on the side of the Entente. On the other hand, if the Central Powers win out, then Austria will see that it has a discontented nation within its borders to be appeased, and will perforce have to give the Czechs what they want.

After the above events the Czechs, South Slavs and Ruthenians of Galicia offered on December 3 a resolution in the Austrian delegations asking for the appointment of a so-called peace council, whose task should be to secure the right of self-determination of the various nationalities. The Czech Deputy Stanek, speaking to this resolution, referred to conditions in Hungary as "a travesty of all civilization." The President called him to order, and thereupon followed such a scene of wild and noisy confusion as only Austrian political assemblies are able to pull off.

During the next day or two the Czechs and South Slavs pelted the government with interpellations and questions, and the Czech leader Stransky made an exceedingly violent attack upon the Hungarian delegates to the joint committee ("delegations") of the Dual Monarchy. Pacher, a German deputy, said that Austrians and Hungarians would have to stand together in repelling "the mighty onslaught upon the existence of Austria and Hungary undertaken by the Czechs and South Slavs."

From all which the conclusion may be drawn that the harmonious relations between Austria's subject races and their government, with which many Austro-German reports have tried to deceive the world since the war began, do not exist. The beautiful contentment of these races is a myth.

The Torture of Tantalus



Kaiser (in despair)—To see so many monuments, so many cathedrals, so many campaniles and to be unable to advance and destroy them! What horror! —From *Il 420*, Florence.

JAPAN

The text of an address delivered at Carnegie Hall last Friday evening by Mr. Straus, under the auspices of the Japan Society and Civic Forum

By Oscar S. Straus

THE two nations that, geographically and by reason of their importance and power, are the natural guardians of the great Western ocean are the United States and Japan. The relationship between these two nations, from the very beginning until the present time, has been such as justifies the name which that ocean bears—Pacific. There have been squalls upon that ocean, but no wrecking storms, because both nations, under some degree of stress at times, have manifested a commendable degree of restraint and consideration one for the other and uniformly repressed demagoguery and exalted statesmanship in their international relationship.

No country and no people in the history of ancient or modern civilization has ever gone through a more rapid renaissance than the island kingdom of Japan, and this because this "Child of the World's Old Age" had been brought up by parents who lived through centuries of development and civilization, which served her as a springboard, to rise within a generation from out her Oriental slumbers to the front rank among nations. It was but a little more than half a century ago that the United States, through Commodore Perry, took Japan by the hand and led her out of her Oriental seclusion, showed her the triumphs of Western civilization and introduced her with proverbial American hospitality to the council board of Western nations. Thirty years later our country followed Great Britain in recognizing the wonderful progress in all that constitutes a civilized nation by freely according to Japan the full rights of an independent nation and in consenting to the abolition of extra-territorial privileges and endowing her with full and complete judicial autonomy.

Viscount Bryce said if the opportunity which the close of the present conflict will afford for the making of laws to forbid future wars be lost, another such may never reappear. In the spirit of that statesmanly forecast, on the 2d of November last, an agreement was entered into between Viscount Ishii, head of the Japanese mission to this country, and Secretary Lansing, which engages the United States and Japan mutually to respect the positions of each other in the region of the Pacific Ocean and to support the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations in China. In this agreement the United States recognizes Japan's special interests in China, similar to ours in Mexico, growing out of the close proximity of the two countries. This farreaching and international engagement follows in spirit and in purpose the just and equitable policy with the Far East inaugurated by the Roosevelt administration—the policy known as the Hay Doctrine—"The Open Door in China," and the second Roosevelt policy known as the "Gentlemen's Agreement" with Japan regarding immigration carried through under the wise statesmanship of Secretary Root, which it was my privilege in 1907 as Secretary of Commerce and Labor, having jurisdiction over the subject of immigration, to put into practical effect after negotiations with Viscount Ishii, then Under Secretary of State.

The value and farreaching significance of the Lansing-Ishii agreement in regard to China in eliminating future irritation in America's relationship with the Far East is of the highest importance. From China herself no danger of breaking the peace of the Far East is likely to come. The danger grows out of the attitude of the other powers, in that China's weakness is a standing invitation for the predatory instincts of the stronger nations. More than that, as stated by Secretary Lansing in announcing the exchange of the diplomatic notes upon the subject, "there had unquestionably been growing up between the peoples of the two countries (the United States and Japan) a feeling of suspicion as to the motives inducing the activities of the other in the Far East, a feeling which if unchecked promised to develop a serious situation." Germany, through her unconscious and unscrupulous diplomacy long before the war began, did much to stimulate, if not create, this suspicion. It was the Kaiser himself who exploited in season and out "The Yellow Peril." The intercepted Zimmermann note before we entered the war was designed to array Japan and Mexico against this country and was predicated upon the assumption that Japan would be as faithless to her allies and to her international obligations as Germany had been in respect to Belgium. To the honor and glory of the Island Kingdom be it said that no nation has uniformly been more faithful to her international obligations than Japan—faithful not only to her treaty obligations but also—and this I can say from personal knowledge—to her "Gentlemen's Agreement."

Japan, which has learned so much from the West and applied with such practical wisdom what she has learned, today is a land of liberty, civil and religious. Her religious liberty is even far in advance of nations who pride themselves upon this most precious of national virtues. Her people have no prejudices based upon religious or ecclesiastical grounds. Japan alone among nations has given the world an example of how a people can throw off the shackles of oppressive autocracy and secure the safeguards of liberty and justice under a constitutional government by following along the plan of peaceful evolution instead of going through the terrible struggles and devastations of bloody revolutions.

In conclusion, I would like to point out and direct attention of the distracted people of Russia, whose magnificent empire is now being dismembered and torn in pieces under a leadership of despair and destruction, to profit by the example of Japan. No greater service could be rendered by the united Allies than to call upon Japan to assume the chief burden of responsibility and leadership in aiding the Russian people to construct their dismembered empire, to reconstitute their leaderless and shattered forces and march onward under the safe guarantees of constitutional liberty by the side of her allies to win the war for democracy and liberty.

Marriages in England and in Germany

MARRIAGES in Great Britain have reached record figures during the war, while they slumped considably in the Teutonic countries, according to Sir Bernard Mallett, president of the British Royal Statistical Society. The following report appeared recently in "The London Times":

"'Crudely stated,' he declared, 'the war has resulted in 200,000 people being married between August, 1914, and June, 1917, who in the ordinary course would not have married.' The marriage rate for 1915 was the highest recorded—19.4; the previous maximum—17.9—was in 1853.

"Alluding to the marriage statistics in belligerent countries, he said that in Hungary the effect of the war had been that more than 600,000 people who in the ordinary course would have married had not done so. In Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Hesse, Hamburg and Bremen, six states containing more than 80 per cent of the German population, the total number of marriages in 1913 was 434,103, and in 1914 the number was 392,053, a decrease of nearly 10 per cent, in spite of a great number of war marriages during the first month of the war. From figures available, in Saxony, compared with the last year of peace, the decrease was about 35 per cent, in Hamburg 24.5 per cent, in Bremen 37.6 per cent, and in Berlin 21.6 per cent, and he presumed that the decrease in the country was greater than in the town.

"The loss of potential lives to the belligerent countries by the decrease in the numbers of children born was, perhaps, the most important effect produced by the war on vital statistics. It was first felt at the end of April, 1915, and it would continue until nine months after the termination of hostilities and demobilization was more or less completed. In England and Wales, in the three years 1911-'13, the decrease in the births amounted to 4.2 per cent in numbers, as compared with 1908-'10, and represented a birth rate of 6.3; in Scotland the decrease in numbers was 4.9 per cent, and 5.6 per cent in the birth rate; in Ireland the decrease was 1.3 per cent in numbers, and 1.2 in the rate. In Germany, where the decrease had been much more rapid of late years, the decline was 5 per cent in numbers and 9 per cent in rate, and in Hungary 1.1 and 3.5. From these figures it was apparent that the United Kingdom had suffered far less than had Germany in this vitally important point.

"The United Kingdom, the speaker stated, had lost by the fall in births over 500,000 potential lives, approximately 10,000 per million of the population. Germany had lost in the same period 2,600,000, approximately 40,000 per million. Hungary had lost 1,500,000, approximately 40,000 per million. At the outbreak of war the population of the Central Empires was about two and a half times as great as that of the United Kingdom; their losses of births had apparently been ten times as great."

Maxims of the War

ALBERT GUINON has some interesting "Maxims of the War" in "Le Gaulois," of Paris, a few of which follow:

"The Germans are excellent creators of the irreparable."

"The tendency of some persons to see transcendent genius in the enemy commanders is not an evidence of the spirit of justice, but merely a form of fear."

"There are some statesmen who join to their political folly the brusque manners of honest men."

"Let us appreciate at its full value, which is of the highest, the organizing faculty of the Germans; but let us not forget that our allies, the English, have organized the universe."

"In politics, when one has solemnly pronounced certain words, one cannot say the contrary. But one can do it."

A German Slant on Brest-Litovsk

THE German papers of the first week in January contain much interesting matter about the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk at the time when the Russians demanded that they be transferred to Stockholm. The changed position of the negotiators of the Central Powers on December 28, as compared with their declarations of December 25, is also much discussed. If the reports of the papers can be relied upon it was pretty widely felt among Reichstag members and by the press that von Kühlmann had shown an awkward hand at Brest-Litovsk. Some newspapers began even to speak of a renewed Cabinet crisis, and the demand was raised in some quarters not only that Kühlmann should be recalled, but even dismissed from his office as Foreign Secretary.

The German public appears to have been misled by the official bulletin of the transactions at Brest-Litovsk on December 28. It was only after neutral newspapers came into Germany that the German papers got the Russian version of what happened. The difference between the two reports at once caused much discussion; the government press was put upon the defensive, or even adopted a critical tone, while the Pan-German organs lifted up their voices and hailed the promise of a new day and more annexations.

The "Berliner Tageblatt" of January 5 expressed its views on the whole matter in a way that will give the American reader a good general view of the situation. Discussing the method for taking a popular vote in the conquered Russian territory, this paper quoted the second paragraph of the German proposals, where it is said that a special commission should be appointed to "determine time and method for the necessary ratification, through a popular vote on a broad basis, of the already existing declarations of secession—a ratification demanded by the Russians." The "Tageblatt" then added:

"The majority parties of the Reichstag and a very large section of public opinion adopted the view that such a 'ratification' through an entirely independent parliament would in fact be indispensable in order that afterward, following a change of government in Russia, the majority of the Russian people and the leading classes might not take the position that the peace treaty was carried through by violence, and therefore, though putting up with it, they would not recognize it."

A Question About Which Most of The German Press Agrees

The "Tageblatt" then goes critically into the matter in the following passage:

"We have not disguised the fact that the policy of December 28 appears to us to have been by no means a happy one; and a large part of the German press, including all the great organs of the Left and the majority parties of the Reichstag, have felt and said the same thing. After a 'peace without forcible annexations and war indemnities' had been proclaimed at Brest-Litovsk on December 25 there came three days later the proposals regarding Poland, Lithuania, Courland, Livonia and Esthonia, with the declaration that the 'popular will' in those districts to withdraw from Russia had already been expressed through resolutions adopted by the provincial councils and the other provisional bodies. Of course, it was added that the 'ratification of the already adopted declarations of secession rendered necessary by the Russian viewpoint' should proceed by a popular vote upon a broad basis.

"If our side was willing in any case to take such a popular view, why, then, did they point in such a circumstantial and solemn form to 'resolutions already adopted,' which nobody knows anything about? The answer of the Russian delegation, published in the neutral press, shows the change of tone that occurred on that day. . . .

"Where the mistake lay and how it was committed is clear to any man who has eyes to see. Ever since the negotiations were opened the pan-Germans, the annexation-mad, the representatives of the unadulterated principle of power, and along with them all political dunces, have been attacking, threatening and insulting the German government, and especially von Kühlmann, and in order to appease them the government made concessions to them, either in substance or in form. Under that pressure the government was not willing to make an unequivocal avowal of the right of self-determination of peoples, and so it was hedged about with clauses, limited with real or apparent reservations. If the government wanted to reach really friendly relations with Russia it should not have listened to the men through whose foolish course and pernicious influence German policy has, since the beginning of this century, been incessantly led into devious paths."

Nobody Could Have Expected a Renewed Peace Offer

How those men of "pernicious influence" feel about developments at Brest-Litovsk had been shown on the previous day, January 4, when Count Westarp, the Conservative leader, made the following remarks in the main committee of the Reichstag:

"We have serious and grave misgivings regarding the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, especially the renewed peace offer made there. Nobody could have expected that this would occur. In the widest circle there is surprise and astonishment. There was no occasion for another peace offer in view of our splendid military position. It means the abandonment of all that we have achieved. The time has now expired and the danger removed, but in foreign countries the impression of weakness has been gained. It will also be difficult to recede from the declaration of December 25 in spite of further military successes. Hence, these will have no effect. . . . What is to be done now? We must break with the terms of the peace offer. Under no circumstances must the period (for its acceptance) be prolonged. That is our imperative demand, all the more as we have doubts about the firmness of our representatives. The withdrawal of all peace offers would shorten the war, inasmuch as our foes continue to hope that they will attain their object through our yielding disposition. We must deprive them of that hope."

Some of the Conservative leaders even demanded in their public speeches that the German military leaders should decide what territory Germany should take from Russia, emphasizing the idea that purely strategical considerations should prevail; in other words, Germany should take whatever territory might seem necessary for giving it a strong military frontier. And the National Liberal members of the Reichstag, not to be outdone in patriotic zeal, adopted unanimously a resolution to the same intent and purpose.

"No More Renunciation! No More Foolish Concessions!"

Junker organs appeared to get great satisfaction from the changed prospect at Brest-Litovsk. The "Deutsche Zeitung," of Berlin, wrote: "We hope that the time has now come when we can and must cast from us that whole lie of July 19 (referring to the Reichstag's peace resolution). We must cut loose, morally and actually, from the ill-starred declaration of December 25 at Brest-Litovsk." The Berlin "Neueste Nachrichten," organ of the Krupps and other industrial magnates, shouted: "No more renunciation, no more foolish concessions." On the other hand, the "Vossische Zeitung," which was anxious to conclude a peace with Russia as quickly as possible in order to pave the way for an alliance against England, thought that Germany had already lost her case at Brest-Litovsk, and the paper furiously attacked Kühlmann.

Now as to the question of the Russian version of what occurred on December 28, and the German reaction to it. On January 4, in a session of the main committee of the Reichstag, Chancellor Count von Hertling complained that the Russian press was accusing the Germans of unfairly backing down from their declaration of Christmas Day in favor of self-determination. He said that he "repelled this insinuation," and added that the paragraphs in question "were dictated by purely practical considerations, and we cannot depart from them."

Referring to these words, the "Vorwärts," the Socialist organ, remarked: "We are sorry to have to say that either the information given to the committee by the Chancellor was incomplete, or else the Petersburg Telegraph Agency reports something that is not true."

A Standpoint That Must Be Interpreted With Discrimination

Then on January 5 another session of the committee was held, at which Baron von dem Bussche, Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, made this statement: "The standpoint of the Imperial Chancellor remains unchanged in regard to the right of peoples to self-determination; but his standpoint must not be interpreted merely in the interests of the Entente. The version printed in the neutral press, according to which the Russian delegates rejected the German proposal of December 28 as not discussible, is in fact incorrect."

About the same time the Chancellor himself invited the party leaders of the majority to his palace and assured them that he still adhered to his declaration, made in the Reichstag on November 29, in regard to self-determination, and this renewal of his avowal is described in the "Berliner Tageblatt" as having "had a visibly soothing effect even upon the Social Democrats." That declaration in the Reichstag was in the following words:

"As for the future of Poland, Courland and Lithuania, we can leave it to the self-determination of their peoples. We expect them to give themselves such a political structure as answers to their conditions and the tendency of their culture."

And there the matter rests for the present, and the world is waiting to see how the Chancellor will make good his words. Now that the Bolshevik delegates have refused to play longer at peace making and have gone home without a peace treaty the world seems invited to watch all the more eagerly to see what Hertling will do with his promise.

War Slogans

GERMAN publishers appear to be keeping up with the procession of latest war slogans and "winged words." The latest German papers are reviewing a new edition of the famous "Büchmann" ("Gefluegelte Worte," or winged words) and call attention to the fact that Churchill's "rats in a hole" and Lloyd George's "silver bullets" have found their due place in this edition. It also mentions the "steam roller," and, curiously enough, gives Colonel Repington as its originator. It quotes from an article by him in "The London Times," advising the French and Belgians to keep on the defensive at first and let the Germans smash their skulls against the Entente positions, and adds: "We have no such need to hurry. We have no Russian steam roller behind us." It would be interesting to know if this really was the first use of the expression, "the Russian steam roller."

Electricity and War in the Kaiser's Domain

THE "Frankfurter Zeitung" announces that the German government has requisitioned all electrical machinery and apparatus, and it is not now possible to buy or sell electric motors without special permit.